THE CASE OF KNEELING At the Holy Sacrament STATED & RESOLVED.

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PART I.

Wherein these QUERIES are considered,

I. Whether Kneeling at the Sacrament be contrary to any express Command of Christ, obliging to the observance of a different Gesture?

II. Whether Kneeling be not a Deviation from that example which our Lord set us at the first Institution?

III. Whether Kneeling be not Unsuitable and Repugnant to the Nature of the Lord's Supper as being no Table Gesture?

LONDON,

Printed for *T. Basset* at the *George* in *Fleetstreet*, *B. Took* at the *Ship* in St. *Paul's Church-yard* and *F. Gardiner* at the *White Horse* in *Ludgate-street*. 1683.

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THE CASE.

Whether it be Lawful to receive the Holy Sacrament Kneeling?

THe Reſolution of the moſt weighty and conſiderable Doubts which may in point of Conſcience ariſe about this matter (and do at preſent much influence the minds and practices of many honeſt and well meaning Diſſenters) will depend upon the Reſolution of theſe following Queries.

1. Whether Kneeling in the Act of Receiving the Holy Sacrament according to the Law of the Land, be not contrary to ſome expreſs Law of Chriſt obliging to the obſervance of a different Poſture?

2. Whether Kneeling be not a deviation from that example which our Lord ſet us at the firſt Inſtitution?

3. Whether Kneeling be not altogether Unſutable

and Repugnant to the nature of the Sacrament, as being no Table Geſture?

4. Whether Kneeling Commanded in the Church of *England* be not contrary to the general Practice of the Church of Chriſt in the firſt and pureſt Ages?

5. Whether it be Unlawful for us to receive Kneeling becauſe this Geſture was firſt introduced by Idolaters, and is ſtill notoriouſly abuſed by the Papiſts to Idolatrous ends and purpoſes.

1. Whether Kneeling in the Act of Receiving the Sacrament in Obedience to the Law of the Land be not a Tranſgreſſion againſt ſome expreſs Law of Chriſt which obliges us to obſerve another Geſture?

For ſatisfaction in this Point our only recourſe muſt be to the Holy Scriptures contained in the Books of the New Teſtament, wherein the whole body of Divine Laws delivered and enacted by our Bleſſed Saviour, are collected and recorded by the Holy Ghoſt. And if there be any Command there extant concerning the uſe of any particular Geſture in the Act of Receiving the Lord's Supper we ſhall upon a diligent enquiry be ſure to find it. But before I give in my Anſwer I readily grant thus much by way of Preface. Whatſoever is enjoyned and appointed by God to be perpetually uſed by all Chriſtians throughout all Ages without any alteration, that can never be nullified or altered by any Earthly Power or Authority whatſoever. When once the Supreme Lawgiver and Governour of the World hath any ways ſignified and declared that ſuch and ſuch poſitive Laws ſhall be perpetually and unalterably obſerved, then thoſe Laws (though in their own nature and with reſpect to the ſubject matter of them they be changeable) muſt remain in

full

full Force and can admit of no Change from the Laws of Men. It would be a piece of intolerable Pride: And the most daring Presumption for any Earthly Prince, any Council, any Society of Men whatsoever, to oppose the known Will of the Soveraign Lord of Heaven and Earth. In this Case nothing can take off the Force and Obligation of such Laws but the same Divine Authority which first passed them into Laws. Thus much being granted and premised, I return this Answer to the Question proposed.

God hath been so far from establishing the unalterable use of any particular Gesture in the Act of Receiving, that among all the Sacred Records of his Will there is not any express Command to determin our practice one way or other. We are left perfectly at our liberty by God to use what comely Gesture we please, either Sitting, Kneeling or Standing. And if the Law of the Land did not restrain our liberty we might use any of the forementioned Gestures without the least violation of any Law of God. This perhaps at first sight may seem very strange and false to many of our Dissenting Brethren who have been taught to believe otherwise, and it may be (to judge Charitably) their Teachers and Pastors have in this particular been imposed on themselves, by the Writings and Assertions of other Men whose Persons they have had in great admiration. But yet I am so secure of this Truth that I challenge all the World to produce the Chapter and Verse wherein any Command is given for the use of any particular Gesture at the Celebration of the Lord's Supper. That Popish Principle of believing as the Church believes and swallowing all for Gospel which she affirms to be so, though very mischievous in its consequence is not so Popish, that is, so ill, as to pin our Faith on the Sleeves of particular Men and relying barely on the word and

See the Case of Indifferent things.

credit of any one Man whom we highly esteem, of what Party or Perswasion soever. For this is to create a Pope to our selves, and make every Man whom we Phansie infallible; this is to make two more than six and the Authority of one Man outweigh the Authority of the Church, that is a Society of Men who are nothing near so liable to deception. I don't desire therefore to be trusted by any means in the matter under present consideration; and therefore I would have the Reader to observe this Rule: Trust no Mans Eyes or Judgment where you are able to use your own, but follow the example of the *Bereans* so highly commended by St. *Paul* upon this very account; that is, to make an ingenuous enquiry into the Truth of things, to search the Scriptures whether these things be so as I say and assert. If this course were generally followed it would go a great way towards the composing those differences, and curing those divisions that at present are on foot amongst us, occasioned by several Tenets and Opinions about matters of Religion. By this means a great many which pass for Divine Oracles and Doctrines, would appear to be no other than the whimsies and inventions of Men. With this cautionary advice I might fairly dismiss this Question as being fully Answered and leave all my Readers to disprove me if they can.

Acts 17. 11.

But becaus some may pretend they have not Leisure, and others want of Skill, and others are not endued with Patience enough to search and examin this matter throughly as it ought, I will yield all the Charitable assistance I am able towards their relief by doing the work to their hands. My Business then at present is this, to Collect and Present to your view all those places which relate to the Sacrament and are most likely to inform us what our Lord by his Institution and Appointment hath obliged us to. And certainly if there be

any

any Command which tyes us up to the uſe of any particular Geſture, Sitting ſuppoſe or Standing, and not Kneeling, we ſhall find it in one or other of the Evangeliſts, who give us a perfect Narrative of the whole Mind and Will of Chriſt in all matters neceſſary to Faith and Salvation: Let us therefore bring them under a ſtrict examination. St. *Matthew* gives this account of the whole matter: *As they were Eating Jeſus took Bread, and bleſſed it, and brake it, and gave it to the Diſciples, and ſaid, Take, Eat; this is my Body. And he took the Cup, and gave Thanks, and gave it to them, ſaying, Drink ye all of it. For this is my Blood of the New Teſtament which is ſhed for many for the Remiſſion of Sins. But I ſay unto you, I will not Drink henceforth of this Fruit of the Vine until that day when I Drink it new with you in my Fathers Kingdom. And when they had Sung an Hymn they went out into the Mount of* Olives. Much to the ſame purpoſe is the account which St. *Mark* gives of this matter.

Mat. 26. 26. Ver. 27. Ver. 28. Ver. 29. Ver. 30.

And as they did Eat, Jeſus took Bread, and bleſſed, and brake it, and gave to them and ſaid, Take, eat, this is my Body. And he took the Cup, and when he had given Thanks, he gave it to them, and they all Drank of it. And he ſaid unto them, this is my Blood of the New Teſtament which is ſhed for many. Verily I ſay unto you, I will Drink no more of the Fruit of the Vine until that day that I Drink it new in the Kingdom of God. And when they had Sung a Hymn they went out into the Mount of Olives. And this is the ſum of what Saint *Mark* delivers concerning the Lord's Supper. Saint *Luke* with very little variation thus deſcribes the matter.

Mar. 14. 22. Ver. 23. Ver. 24. Ver. 25. Ver. 26.

And he took Bread, and gave Thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, ſaying, This is my Body which is given for you, this do in Remembrance of me. Likewiſe alſo the

Luke 22. 19. Ver. 20.

Cup

Cup after Supper saying, this Cup is the New Testament in my Blood which is shed for you. This Evangelist indeed makes mention of another Cup which our Lord took, and after he had blessed it, he said to his Disciples, *Take this and divide it among your selves*; and withal told them that he would not Drink of the Fruit of the Vine until the Kingdom of God should come; which Cup plainly refers to the Passover as will appear to any one who will consult and compare the 15, 16, 17, and 18 Verses of the fore mentioned Chapter; and is supposed to be that Cup wherewith the *Jews* were wont to begin the Paschal Feast, which they Blessed or Consecrated in this Form of words: Blessed be God who Created the Fruit of the Vine. And whereas our Lord saith he will Drink no more of the Fruit of the Vine, his meaning is, that he would never Celebrate the Feast of the Passover with them any more after that time, but their next Festival Meeting should be in Heaven, and this is very consistent with our Lord's Drinking another Cup after this, which he Consecrated to another use and signification, in the Sacrament, Ver. 20. And this is all the light this Divine Writer affords us concerning the outward Rites and Ceremonies, which our Lord used himself at the Institution of the Sacrament, and established for the use of all Christians in all succeeding Ages.

See Dr. Lightfoot on Mat. 26. 26. Horæ Heb. & Talmud.

As for St. *John*, he makes no mention at all of the Institution of this Holy Feast by our Lord. All that can be collected from his Writings relates to the Passover, or according, to the Learned Dr. *Lightfoot*, to what past between Christ and his Disciples at a common and ordinary meal in *Bethany*, and that for this reason among many others judiciously urged by him, because the Disciples thought when our Lord had said to him, Ver. 27. *That thou doest do quickly*, that he had given order to *Judas* who kept the bag, to buy those things that they had

Joh. 13. from Ver. 1. to 31. vid. Hor. Heb. Tal. p. 300. and Mat. 26. 6.

had need of againſt the Feaſt, *viz.* the Paſſover; and therefore all thoſe paſſages, and that diſcourſe related by St. *John* in the foregoing Verſes of that Chapter, were tranſacted at an ordinary and common Supper. And indeed this ſeems to be the great end and deſign which St. *John* propoſed to himſelf in writing his Goſpel, and which throughout he conſtantly purſues, *viz.* To add out of his own Knowledge ſeveral remarkable paſſages (eſpecially ſuch as tend to demonſtrate the Divinity of our Saviour) as had been omitted by the other Evangeliſts in their Hiſtory of the Birth, Life, Actions and Sufferings of our Bleſſed Saviour. There is another paſſage in St. *John's* Goſpel which in the Judgment of many Learned Divines both Antient and Modern, hath reſpect to the Lord's Supper though not at that time inſtituted when thoſe myſterious words were uttered by our Saviour. Joh. 5. 53.

Except ye Eat the Fleſh of the Son of Man, and Drink his Blood, ye have no life in you. Whoſo Eateth my Fleſh and Drinketh my Blood hath Eternal life, and I will raiſe him up at the laſt day. For my Fleſh is meat indeed and my Blood is drink indeed. He that Eateth my Fleſh and Drinketh my Blood dwelleth in me and I in him. Ver. 54. Ver. 55. Ver. 56. Now all that can be inferr'd from theſe words as they relate to this Holy Feaſt is only thus much, that it's highly neceſſary for all Chriſtians (who have an opportunity to do it) to partake of the Lord's Supper as they would partake in the merits of his Sacrifice and the Efficacy of his Death and his Sufferings and that none but ſuch as do receive the tokens and ſigns of his Body broken, and Blood ſhed for their Sins, ſhall be owned and rewarded by him as his Friends. Theſe are all the places that we meet with in the Goſpel; let us now ſee what is delivered in the *Acts* and other Writings of the Apoſtles and Divinely inſpired Authors. Among all their

Writings

Writings there is but one place which gives any account of the Hiſtory of the Sacrament and, Inſtitution of it, and that is in the 1 Epiſ. to the *Corinthians*, Chap. 11. where St. *Paul* declares that what he delivered to them, he received by immediate Revelation from Chriſt himſelf, *viz. That the Lord Jeſus the ſame night in which he was betrayed, took Bread, and when he had given Thanks he brake it, and ſaid, Take, Eat, this is my Body which is broken for you, this do in Remembrance of me. After the ſame manner he took the Cup when he had Supped, ſaying, this Cup is the New Teſtament in my Blood, this do, as oft as ye Drink it, in Remembrance of me. For as often as ye Eat this Bread and Drink this Cup ye do ſhew (or ſhew ye) the Lord's Death till he come.* There are ſeveral other places wherein the Holy Sacrament is mentioned and deſcribed by ſeveral Names and Titles ſutable to the nature and ends of it, which for brevity ſake I omit, and deſire the Reader to Conſult at his leiſure; and I would not put him to that trouble, if they did contain any thing that made againſt Kneeling or that lookt like a command for the uſe of any other Geſture. Let us now look back alittle upon the places forementioned and ſee what our Lord hath ordained and appointed to be of perpetual uſe in his Church.

Ver. 23.
Ver. 24.
Ver. 25.
Ver. 26.
1 Cor. 10. 16, 21.
1 Cor. 11. 20.
Act. 2. 46.
Act. 20. 7.

The Apoſtles and Diſciples of our Lord at the Inſtitution of the Sacrament were the Repreſentatives of the whole Church and are to be conſidered under a double capacity. Either as Governours and Miniſters entruſted by Chriſt with the Power of diſpenſing and adminiſtring the Sacrament, or as ordinary and lay Communicants.

If we conſider them as Governours and Stewards of the Myſteries, their Duty to which they are obliged by the expreſs command of their Lord is to take the Bread into their Hands, to bleſs and conſecrate it to that myſterious

myſterious and Divine uſe to which he deſigned it, to break it, to give it to the Communicants, as he gave it them: And ſo in like manner to Take the Cup, to bleſs it, to give it to their fellow Chriſtians.

That which they were obliged to do by the command of our Lord, conſidered as private Men, and in common with all believers, was to take and receive the Conſecrated Elements of Bread and Wine, to Eat and Drink, and to do all this in Commemoration of his wonderful Love in giving his Body to be broken and his Blood to be ſhed for the Sins of the World.

And what the leaſt Syllable or Shadow of a Command is there here in all this Hiſtory for the uſe of any Geſture in the Act of Receiving? Since then the Holy Scripture is altogether ſilent as to this matter, its ſilence is a full and clear demonſtration that Kneeling is not repugnant to any expreſs Command of our Lord, becauſe no Geſture was ever Commanded at all: And this hath been ingenuouſly Confeſſed in writing by a great Enemy to Kneeling, and a great Advocate for Sitting, *That the Geſture of Sitting is but a matter of Circumſtance and not expreſly Commanded.* A manuſcript of an unknown Author cited by Mr. Paybody p. 48.

But the *Scotch* Miniſters Aſſembled at *Perth*, affirm that when our Lord at the Inſtitution Commanded his Diſciples to do this, he did by thoſe words Command them to uſe that Geſture which he uſed at that time, as well as to Take, Eat, Drink, &c. The Force of their Argument lyes in this, if it have any force at all: Our Saviour Sate at the Paſſover, as the Scriptures plainly inform us, and it is to be ſuppoſed he continued in the ſame poſture when he inſtituted and Adminiſtred the Sacrament, which was at the cloſe of the Paſſover, therefore *Do this* relates to, and includes the Geſture amongſt other things. But this is a miſerable *Object.* Mat. 26. 20. Mar. 14. 18. Luk. 22. 14.

ſhift which tends to Sink rather than Support their Cauſe.

Anſw. I. For firſt, If our Lord did Sit when he Adminiſtred the Sacrament (which we will ſuppoſe at preſent) yet there is no reaſon in the World to incline us to think, that he intended by thoſe words, *Do this*, to oblige us to obſerve his Geſture only, and not ſeveral other Circumſtances, which he obſerved at the ſame time. Since Chriſt hath not reſtrained and interpreted theſe words *Do this*, ſo that they ſhould only reſpect Sitting as he did, why ſhould we not think our ſelves obliged to do all that he did at the ſame time as well as this? For example, If theſe words may be interpreted thus, *Do this*; that is, Sit as Chriſt did, why not thus alſo? *Do this*, that is, celebrate the Sacrament in an upper Room, in a private Houſe, late at night or the Evening, after a full Supper, † in the Company of 12 or 13 at moſt and they only Men, with your Heads Covered according to the cuſtom of thoſe Countries, and with unleavened Bread? There lyeth as great an Obligation upon all Chriſtians to obſerve all theſe Circumſtances in Imitation of our Lord by vertue of theſe words, *Do this*, as there doth to Sit. So that this Argument violently recoils upon thoſe that urge it, and proves a great deal more than they are willing to have it. It concludes ſtrongly againſt their own Practices and the liberty they take in omitting ſome things and preſſing the neceſſary obſervance of others, upon a reaſon which equally obliges to all.

† Mat. 26. 20. Mar. 14. 17. Luk. 22. 14.

Anſw. II. But I deſire our Diſſenting Brethren (who may be of the ſame Perſwaſion with theſe *Scotch-men*) to take this further conſideration along with them, which I think will turn the Scales, and make deep impreſſions upon Tender Conſciences and oblige them to obſerve moſt of the other Circumſtances which they omit rather

rather than this of Sitting, which they ſo earneſtly preſs and contend for. All thoſe forementioned Circumſtances (except the two Laſt, which too are generally allowed among Learned Men on all ſides) are expreſly mentioned in the Goſpel, and were without diſpute obſerved by Chriſt at the Inſtitution of the Sacrament: But the particular Geſture uſed by him at that time, is not expreſſy mentioned, and what it was is very diſputable and dubious, as I ſhall evince by and by under the ſecond Query.

How then can any Man think himſelf obliged in Conſcience, by the force of theſe words, *Do this*, to do what Chriſt is no where expreſly ſaid to do, and not obliged to do what the Scripture affirms he really did? Why that which is dark and dubious ſhould be made an infallible Rule of Conſcience and that which is plainly and evidently ſet down in Scripture ſhould have no force nor be eſteemed any Rule at all: Theſe are Queſtions, I confeſs, beyond my capacity, and ſurpaſſing my skill to reſolve.

Anſw. III. 1 Cor. 11. 23. 4, 5, 6. 27, 28. Verſes.

It's clear from St. *Paul* in the forecited place that thoſe words of our Lord, *Do this*, do reſpect only the Bread and Wine, which ſignify the Body and Blood of Chriſt, and thoſe other actions there ſpecified by him, which are eſſential to the right and due celebration of that Holy Feaſt. For when it's ſaid, *Do this in Remembrance of me*, and, *this do ye as oft as ye Drink it in Remembrance of me*; and, *As oft as ye Eat this Bread, and Drink this Cup, ye do ſhew the Lords Death till he come*; it's plain that, *Do this*, muſt be reſtrained to the Sacramental Actions, there mentioned and not extended to the Geſture, of which the Apoſtle ſpeaks not a word. Our Lord Inſtituted the Sacrament in Remembrance of his Death and Paſſion, and not in Remembrance of his Geſture in Adminiſtring it:

And conſequently, *Do this*, is a general Command, obliging us only to ſuch particular Actions and Rites as he had Inſtituted, and made neceſſary to be uſed in order to this great end, *viz.* to ſignify and repreſent his Death, and that Bloody Sacrifice which he offered to his father, on the Croſs, for us miſerable Sinners. Upon the whole matter, I think, we may certainly conclude, that there is not a tittle of a Command in the whole New Teſtament to oblige us to receive the Lords Supper in any particular Poſture; and if any be ſo ſcrupulous after all, as not to receive it in any other Geſture, but what is expreſly Commanded, they muſt never receive it as long as they live: And then I leave this to their ſerious conſideration; How they will be ever able to excuſe their neglect of a known neceſſary duty (ſuch as receiving the Sacrament is) before God the Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who loved us ſo much as to ſend his Son to be a propitiation for our Sins: How they will ever Anſwer to their Crucified Saviour their Living and Dying in the breach of an expreſs Command of his given a little before his Paſſion to *Do this in Remembrance of him*, meerly becauſe the Geſture preſcribed by Authority, was croſs to their private Wills and Phanſies, but not to the Mind and Will of God.

2. For the further Proof and Confirmation of this Aſſertion, that there is no expreſs Command in Scripture for the uſe of any particular Geſture in the Act of receiving the Sacrament, I will appeal to the Judgment and Practice of our Diſſenting Brethren and all the Reformed Churches in *Europe*.

1. To begin with our Nonconforming Brethren. There are a great many Serious and Sincere Hearted Perſons

Perſons among them, who profeſs that (were they left to their Liberty and not tyed up by the Law to Kneel at the Sacrament) they could with a ſafe Conſcience uſe that Geſture as well as any other. And they further tell us, that they are willing, and ready to Communicate with us, provided we would Adminiſter the Sacrament to them either Sitting or Standing, that is, any way but that which is impoſed by Law. For the Rule by which they conduct their Conſciences in this matter is this: Things in their own nature indifferent which are no where Commanded or prohibited by God in Scripture, cannot, nor ought not to be reſtrained and limited by any Power or Authority of Man: And therefore all ſuch things which God left free for us to do or not do without Sin, become Sinful to us when impoſed by human Authority. It's remote from my buſineſs to ſhew how weak and falſe a Principle this is, and of what miſchievous conſequence to the Peace of the Church, and for that reaſon I will paſs it by. But thus much may be inferr'd from this Tenent to my purpoſe, that they who hold and urge it as a reaſon why they cannot receive Kneeling, which otherwiſe they could ſafely do, plainly own that as to the Geſture, in the Act of Receiving it is in its own nature Indifferent, and left free by God for us to uſe or refuſe as we think fit; and by neceſſary conſequence that there is no expreſs Command given by God for the uſe of any particular Geſture. It could not be a matter of indifferency to our Diſſenting Brethren, whoſe Principle this is, if there were no Law of Man, to Kneel at the Sacrament, and now there is ſuch a Law, it could not be Indifferent to them whether they received Sitting or Standing, as they profeſs it is, if there were any Law of God obliging to the uſe of any one Geſture whatſoever.

2. That there is no expreſs Command in Scripture for

for any one Geſture in the Act of Receiving may be inferr'd from the Judgment and Practice of all the Reformed Churches abroad: Whoſe Judgment and example will, I preſume, ſway much with thoſe who ſeparate from the Church of *England*, as not being ſufficiently purged from the Corruptions of the Church of *Rome* as other Neighbour Churches are, and who ſtood once Engaged in a Solemn Covenant, to reform the Churches of *England* and *Ireland* according to the Word of God and the Pattern of the beſt Reformed Churches.

Let us now compare the practice of our Church with the example of the Proteſtant Churches abroad and ſee whether ſhe ought to reform the Geſture preſcribed at the Sacrament.

The Reformed Churches of *France*, and thoſe of *Geneva* and *Helvetia* Stand, the *Dutch* generally Sit, but in ſome places (as in Weſt *Frieſland*) they Stand. The Churches of the *Bohemian* and *Auguſtan* Confeſſion which ſpread through the large Kingdoms of *Bohemia*, *Denmark*, and *Sweden*, through *Norway*, the Dukedom of *Saxony*, *Lithuany* and the Ducal Pruſſia in *Poland*, the Marquiſate of *Brandenburg* in *Germany* and ſeveral other places and free Cities in that Empire, do for the moſt part, if not all of them, retain the Geſture of Kneeling. The *Bohemian* Churches were reformed by *John Huſſe* and *Jerom* of *Prague* who Suffered Martyrdom at *Conſtance* about the year 1416. long before *Luthers* time, and thoſe of the *Augsburg* or *Auguſtan* Confeſſions were founded and reformed by *Luther* and were the firſt Proteſtants properly ſo called. Both theſe Churches ſo early reformed and of ſo large extent did not only uſe the ſame Geſture that our Church enjoyns at the Sacrament, but they together with thoſe of the *Helvetick* Confeſſion, did in 3 general Synods unanimouſly, condemn the

Sitting

Sitting Gesture (though they esteemed it in it self Lawful) as being Scandalous for this Remarkable reason, *viz.* because it was used by the *Arrians* (as their Synods call the *Socinians*) in contempt of our Saviours Divinity; who therefore placed themselves as Fellows with their Lord at his Table. And thereupon they entreat and exhort all Christians of their Communion *to change Sitting into Kneeling or Standing, both which Ceremonies we Indifferently leave free according as the Custom of any Church hath obtained, and we approve of their use without Scandal and Blame.* Moreover they affirm, *That these* Socinians *who deny Christ to be* God, *were the first that introduced Sitting at the Sacrament into their Churches contrary to the Practice of all the Evangelical Churches in* Europe. Among all these Forreign Churches of the Reformation, there is but one that I can find which useth Sitting, and forbids Kneeling, for fear of Bread Worship, but yet in that Synod wherein they condemned Kneeling they left it to the choice of their Churches to use Standing, Sitting, or an Ambulatory Gesture (as the *French* do) and at last conclude thus: *These Articles are setled by mutual Consent, that is, the good of the Churches require it, they may and ought to be changed, augmented or diminished.* What now should be the ground and reason of this Variety both in Opinion and Practice touching the Gesture to be used at the Lords Supper? Is it to be supposed or imagined that an Assembly of Learned and Pious Divines, met together on purpose to consult how to reform their Churches, according to the Pure Word of God, should through Weakness and inadvertency overlook an express Command of Christ for the perpetual use of any particular Gesture, if any such there had been? Or shall we be so Uncharitable as to think that all these Eminent Churches willfully past it by,

1 At Cracow Anno. Dom. 1573.
2 Petricow or Peterkaw 1578.
3 Wladislaw 1583.
Harmon. 4 Synods of Holl.

by, and eſtabliſhed what was moſt agreeable to their own Phanſies contrary to the known Will of God? Would they have given liberty to all of their Communion to uſe ſeveral Geſtures according to the cuſtom of their ſeveral Churches, if our Lord had tyed them to obſerve but one? Would they declare (as the *Dutch* Synod doth) that what they enjoyned might be altered, if the good of the Church ſo required; if ſo be Sitting had been expreſly Commanded by our Lord, to be uſed by all Chriſtians to the end of the World? No undoubtedly, they would not, we cannot either in reaſon or Charity ſuppoſe it.

The true Principle upon which all theſe Reformed Churches built, and by which they are able to reconcile all this ſeeming difference in this matter, is the very ſame with that which the Church of *England* goes by in her Synods and Convocations, *viz.* That as to Rites and Ceremonies of an Indifferent nature, every National Church hath Authority to inſtitute, change and aboliſh them, as they in Prudence and Charity ſhall think moſt fit, and conducive to the ſetting forth God's Glory, the Edification of their People, and the Decent and Reverend Adminiſtration of the Holy Sacrament. Whoſoever therefore refuſes to receive the Lords Supper according to the Conſtitution of the Church of *England*, purely becauſe Kneeling is contrary to the expreſs Command of Chriſt, muſt condemn the Judgment and Practice of all the Reformed Churches beyond the Seas, who all agree in this, that the Geſture in the Act of Receiving is to be reckoned among things Indifferent, and that whether we Sit, or Kneel, or Stand, or Receive Walking, we Tranſgreſs no Law of God; and conſequently they prove my aſſertion true, that Kneeling

Vi. Art. 34 obſervat. of the French and Dutch Divines on the Harmony of Confeſſions edit. Geneva 1681. ſect. 14. p. 120. *in hoc etiam ritu* (ſpeaking of Kneeling at the Sac.) *Suam cuiq; Eccleſiæ libertatem Salvam relinquendam arbitramur.*

ling is not contrary to any expreſs Command no more than any other, becauſe they allow of all Lawful in themſelves to be uſed, which cannot conſiſt with an expreſs Command for the uſe of any one Geſture whatſoever.

Query 2.

Whether Kneeling be not a Deviation from that example which Chriſt ſet us at the firſt Inſtitution?

FOr a full and ſatisfactory reſolution of this doubt, I ſhall propound theſe 4. following particulars to the conſideration of our Diſſenting Brethren, which I will endeavour with all Brevity and Clearneſs to make good.

1. That it can never be proved, ſo as that the conſcience may ſurely build upon it, what Geſture Chriſt and his Apoſtles uſed at the Celebration of the Sacrament.

2. Suppoſing that our Lord did Sit, yet his bare example doth not oblige all Chriſtians to a like practice.

3. That they who urge the example of Chriſt for our Rule in this caſe, do not follow it themſelves.

4. That they who Kneel at the Lords Supper in complyance with the Cuſtom and Conſtitution of the Church, do manifeſtly follow the example of Chriſt.

First, The particular Geſture uſed by Chriſt and his Apoſtles at the Inſtitution and Celebration of the Sacrament can never be demonſtrated ſo as that the conſcience may ſurely build upon it. This I ſhall endeavour to make good theſe two ways. Firſt, we have no ſure ground for it in Scripture. Secondly, the Cuſtoms obſerved by the *Jews* render it very incertain and diſputable.

1. All that can be gathered from Scripture amounts to no more then this, that as they were Eating, or as they did Eat, as the Phraſe is rendred in St. *Mark*, *Jeſus took Bread and bleſſed it and brake it, and gave it to his Diſciples, and he took the Cup (when he had Supped,* ſaith St. *Paul, after Supper,* as St. *Luke* hath it) *and gave Thanks; and gave it to them, ſaying, Drink ye all of it.* Now it's very clear from this Account which the Scripture gives, that our Lord did Inſtitute and Adminiſter the Sacrament to his Diſciples and that they did Receive it: But whether Sitting, Kneeling, or Standing, is no where mentioned nor plainly determined. It's clear that he Inſtituted this Holy Feaſt, at the cloſe of the Paſchal Feaſt, for he took the Bread as they were Eating, and the Cup when he had Supped; that he did Celebrate the Paſſover according to the uſual manner of the *Jews* in thoſe times which was in a Diſcumbing poſture on Beds placed about the Table much after the manner of our lying or leaning upon Couches. Yet whether after all the Apoſtles Received, or our Lord Adminiſtred the Sacrament ſtill Sitting after the ſame manner as they did at the Paſſover, is not expreſt, nor can it be certainly concluded from the Word of God. The utmoſt ſtrength of their Argument who urge Sitting in Imitation of our Saviours example can ariſe to no more then this: That it's probable our Lord did not alter the Geſture he uſed at the Paſſover, when he Inſtituted the

Mat. 26. 26. Mar. 14. 22.

1 Cor. 11. 25. Luk. 22. 20.

Luk. 22. 14. Mat. 26. 20. ἀνέκειτο μετὰ τῶν δώδεκα, in the original.

the Sacrament. But who ſees not that a probability is far from a certainty. A thing may be really falſe though it ſeem likely to be true: And that opinion which is ſpeculatively probable may when reduced to Practice become a great Sin and a great Error. Thus to refuſe to receive the Holy Sacrament Kneeling, and thereby neglect a known neceſſary Duty, and not only ſo, but to diſturb the Peace, and break the Unity of the Church, upon a bare probability that our Lord ſate, which we are not, cannot be ſure of, is a great fault in all who are guilty of it. For they appeal to an incertain example againſt a plain certain Command, *viz.* to receive the Tokens and Pledges of our Saviours dying love, and *to do this in Remembrance of him.* They therefore who urge the example of Chriſt for Sitting at the Sacrament and as a Plea againſt Kneeling, would do well firſt to make the example appear, and prove that he did Sit, before they preſs a Conformity.

2. If we conſult the Records of *Jewiſh* Antiquities and the Writings of Learned Men both *Jews* and *Chriſtians* concerning the Paſſover and the manner of the *Jews* Celebrating it, we ſhall find that they did not keep to one and the ſame Geſture throughout the Solemnity. For the *Babylon* and *Jeruſalem Talmud*, *Maimonides* and *Buxtorf* do certifie us that they did alter their poſture at the Paſſover, though the Lying or Leaning poſture was generally and moſt Religiouſly uſed and obſerved at this Feaſt above any other. And the Scripture gives ſome hints and intimations of the Truth of what they deliver.

1. It was the antient cuſtom of the *Jews* and of thoſe Eaſtern Countries at their ordinary Feaſts and Entertainments to Waſh their Hands and their Feet, and eſpecially at their Religious Feaſts to Waſh their Hands often. At the Paſſover they Waſhed their Hands thrice

Gen. 18.4.19. c.2. 24. 32.[4] Mat. 15. 2. Mar. 7. 3. Luk. 7. 44.

at leaſt, according to the *Talmudiſts* and the Authors forecited. Which Ceremony could not well, nor was not in all likelyhood performed during their Lying or Leaning poſture on their left ſides as their manner was. For the reaſon of their Waſhing at all, and ſo frequently, was, that no legal Impurity or Uncleanneſs might cleave to them, and to ſignify the great care they took to keep this Solemn Feaſt Holy to the Lord: And as they were Nice and Curious in Purifying and Waſhing themſelves, ſo in keeping the Beds, Table, Diſhes, and all other Utenſils neceſſary for this Feaſt, clean and free from all pollution too. To Waſh ſo often more than the Law required and the general cuſtom of thoſe Eaſtern and hot Countries warranted was a Phariſaical Invention and ſuperſtitiouſly abuſed by them; and as ſuch it's certain our Lord did not uſe it, but that he did Waſh ſometime before he Eat the Paſchal Supper, and after he had Sat down as the manner was, there is little reaſon to doubt; and all that I Infer from hence is, that when he Waſhed, be it once or twice, he altered his poſture, and in all probability either aroſe from his Bed and went to the place where Water, and veſſels were prepared and ſet for ſuch uſes, or had Water brought to him in a Baſin, wherein he Waſhed either Sitting upright, or Standing; which are both different from that Geſture which was peculiar and proper to the Paſſover. St. *John* in Chap. 13. 2. 4, 5. Verſes, will explain and Confirm this Cuſtom we are ſpeaking of. There he tells us *how that Supper being ended* (that is, in a manner or almoſt ended, for by comparing the 12 and 26 and 27 Verſes together we ſhall find plainly that they had not quite finiſhed their Supper) *Jeſus riſeth from Supper, and laid aſide his Garments, and took a Towel and girded himſelf, and after that poureth Water into a*

Tract. Berachoth. Peſachin. Maimon. in Chametz. Umatſah. Buxtor. Synag. c. 13.

Vi. Buxt. Synagoga, c. 12. p. 286.

Vi. Joh. 2. 6.

a Basin, and began to Wash the Disciples Feet. There are Learned Men on both sides who think all this was done at the Feast of the Passover, and that towards the close of it when he Instituted the Lords Supper, but I shall wave this, and not insist upon it, because, as I hinted before, I believe as the Learned Dr. *Lightfoot* doth, it was no more then an ordinary or common meal, and therefore I only shall conclude thus much from it, which I think is very probable: That it was usual with the *Jews* to Wash at their Feasts and that in Supper time: And that our Saviour complyed with this custom. To Wash the Feet of the Guests was the office of Servants and it was altogether unusual for the Master of the Feast to do, but our Lord to set his Disciples an example of Humility and Charitable condescension one to another, performs this servil office himself towards them, which he might as well have done after Supper if it had not been usual to have Washed in Supper time; seeing then it appears partly from Scripture, and partly from Antient Monuments of *Jewish* customs, that the *Jews* were wont both before and at their Civil and Religious Feasts to Wash, and particularly at the Passover, then it's very probable our Lord did so too, and altered his posture as they did; nay it is very probable that our Lord to make his Disciples understand what he was about to do, did at the Institution of this new Feast, the Holy Sacrament of his Body and Blood, Wash before it, and having changed the posture that he was in before at the Eating of the Paschal Supper, did not resume it, but used a new posture at this new Festival Solemnity, but what that was is not certain.

Vi. Grot. in loc. Dr. Hamond on v. 26. Mark. 14. 12.

Joh. 13, 14, 15.

2. At the beginning of the Paschal Feast the *Jews* did put themselves into this Discumbing or Leaning posture, and used it while they Eat and Drank the two first.

firſt Cups of Wine (for every Gueſt was obliged to Drink four Cups at this Feaſt) but at the third Cup called the *Cup of bleſſing* in their Language, and the fourth ſtyled *the Song or Pſalm Cup* when they ſung the Hymn, there was no neceſſity of lying along; and it's likely our Lord took an opportunity when he took the third Cup to change the uſe and ſignification of it, and to Inſtitute the Euchariſtical Cup; called by St. *Paul* the Cup of bleſſing, 1 *Cor.* 10. 16.

As the Talmudiſts and forementioned Writers teſtify. Vi. Dr. Lightfoot Hor. Heb. 291.

3. Before they Drank of the third Cup the Maſter of the Feaſt took a piece of Unleavened Bread and brake it, and after he had Eat ſome himſelf, he offers the remainder to the reſt of the Company, to do the like. After this he proceeds to take ſome of the bitter Herbs and to dip them in a thick Sawce called by them *Charoſeth* (which was formed in the ſhape of a Brick to repreſent the hard ſlavery undergone by their Forefathers in the Brick-Kilns of *Egypt*) and commanded all the Society to follow his example. Now this was not done in an inclining poſture as the *Jewiſh* Doctors teach us, and they give this reaſon for it, becauſe this was to put them in mind of the *Egyptian* bondage, and therefore here they ſtood in all probability, becauſe to Eat Standing was the manner of Slaves, whereas Lying along after a Lordly manner, was in token of that eaſe and reſt they enjoyed in the Land of *Canaan* and of their redemption from the Houſe of bondage. So often therefore as they Eat the bitter Herbs, ſo often, they changed their Geſture.

See Mr. Ainſworth a Learned Non-Conformiſt in. ex. 12. 8. 11.

Buxt. Syn. c. 15. p. 300.

Peſachin fol. 37. 2. Hor. Heb. 291, 292.

4. Though the *Jews* in their Solemn Feaſts uſed Diſcumbing, yet in bleſſing and giving thanks before thoſe Feaſts they were, as *Philo* relateth, in a Standing Geſture, with their Eyes and Hands lifted up to Heaven. And therefore it's no way probable that Chriſt and his Apoſtles would continue in their Table Geſture at the bleſſing of

In vita contemplat. p. 663. ccl. Allobro. edi. 1603.

of the Holy Supper which is an higher Ordinance than the Paſſover: Becauſe this would be very unſutable to ſo great a Solemnity: Eſpecially too if Dr. *Lightfoot's* Opinion be true (and it may be ſo for any thing that appears to the contrary,) *viz.* that Chriſt changed the third Cup at the Paſſover, called the Cup of bleſſing, into the Sacramental Cup, becauſe it was the cuſtom of the *Jews* then to alter their Table Geſture that was peculiar to the Paſſover; and it's highly improbable that our Lord would continue in the Table Geſture contrary to the General and Currant Cuſtom of the *Jews*. They that don't think ſo as I do in this particular will receive little advantage by being croſs. For if it may be ſuppoſed that our Lord Sate ſometimes when the *Jews* were wont to Stand, it may equally be ſuppoſed that he Stood ſometimes when the *Jews* were wont to Sit; and what becomes of their Argument for Sitting at the Sacrament after the example of Chriſt; becauſe that ſtands built upon ſuppoſition that our Lord Sate at the Paſſover, as the *Jews* did, and continued in the ſame Geſture when he Inſtituted the Sacrament, which was before the Paſchal Solemnity was over. I will only obſerve this briefly by the way and then proceed to ſhut up all upon this head.

That thoſe Nonconformiſts who cry out ſo vehemently againſt the Church for Impoſing, and her Members for uſing a Kneeling Geſture, were very unfortunate in their choice when they pitcht upon Sitting, and urged it as the only neceſſary Geſture to receive in, in Conformity to our Saviours Practice and Example. Becauſe the Standing Geſture may be much better maintained and defended then Sitting, and hath more and greater probabilities attending it.

If therefore variety of Geſtures were uſed by the *Jews* at the Paſſover, and it no where appears from Scrip-

Scripture that our Lord did not comply in this matter, then we cannot know for certain what the particular Geſture was which Chriſt uſed at the Inſtitution of the Sacrament; it might be Lying along, and it might be ſitting upright, it might be Standing in an adoring poſture with his Hands and Eys lifted up to Heaven, which is much more probable then either of the former for the reaſons forementioned, we cannot certainly ſay which, and yet we muſt be certain of one before we can build upon it as an Infallible Rule of Conſcience. Let it be therefore granted to our Brethren who differ from us in this point, that our Saviour Sate at the Paſſover, that the Sacrament was Inſtituted by him before the Paſchal Feaſt was fully ended, that the Diſciples Eat the Sacramental Bread and Drank the Sacramental Cup in the ſame poſture as they Eat and Drank at the Paſſover: What of all this? how will the neceſſity of a Sitting Geſture appear from theſe premiſes? Why, thus: Therefore our Lord Inſtituted and Adminiſtred the Holy Sacrament Sitting ſay they. How doth this follow of courſe I ask? Since they Eat and Drank in ſeveral poſtures at the Paſchal Feaſt.

I confeſs the Argument had been ſtrong if they could make it appear, that throughout the whole Solemnity of the Paſſover no other Geſture but Sitting was uſed by our Lord. But this I am ſure can never be done, and conſequently their concluſion can never be good. From the whole I conclude thus much: Since the example of our Lord cannot be certainly known in this matter, our Church cannot be charged for deviating from it: And conſequently to ſcruple Conformity to the practice of our Church, becauſe ſhe doth not Conform to the practice of Chriſt which no body can certify us of, is very Unjuſt and Unreaſonable.

2. Suppoſing our Lord did Sit as they will have it, yet

yet his bare example doth not oblige all Chriſtians to a like Practice.

1. Becauſe naked examples without ſome Rule or Note added to them to ſignify that it is the mind and will of God, to have them conſtantly followed and perpetually Imitated by us, have not the force of a Law perpetually obliging the Conſcience. Thus in our preſent Caſe though our Lord did Sit at the Sacrament, yet his example alone doth not become an everlaſting Rule for all Ages to obſerve, becauſe he hath no where diſcovered his binding will and pleaſure in this particular. And conſequently ſince he hath left us in the Dark, we may act contrary to his will and intention, when we ſo zealouſly preſs and follow his example, eſpecially in this matter relating to Geſture. For even under the Law where all other Circumſtances of Time, Place, Habits and the Ceremonies relating to Divine Worſhip, were with great particularity deſcribed, this of Geſture was left free and undetermined. God never obliged them to uſe any particular Geſture in any particular part of his Worſhip, but left it to their choice, whether to Kneel or Stand or Bow down their Heads and Bodyes, or fall proſtrate on the Earth; to uſe all or any one of theſe as Cuſtom and their own Pious Prudence ſhould prompt and direct them. Seeing then that the Geſture in the Worſhip of God was never determined under the Law: Since it was and is in its own nature a Mutable Ceremony in the Service of God, it remains ſo unto this day: Our Lord left it as he found it, unleſs it can be proved that he hath by ſome Command or Note of Immutability fixt and determined it to all ſucceeding Ages. But becauſe no ſuch Command or Note is to be found, therefore we are not tyed in Conſcience to a ſtrict Imitation of his example. A few inſtances will clear this point. Our Lord was not Baptized till Luk. 3. 23.

he was about Thirty years of Age, but this example is not esteemed by the generality of Dissenters a Law or Warrant for us to defer our Baptism so long. So he Instituted the Sacrament alittle before his Death: But is there no obligation upon us to recieve it but when we are near our Graves and under a Prospect of Death. He also Instituted and Administred the Sacrament after a full meal in an upper Room, to Men only. Doth his bare example oblige us to observe punctually all these Circumstances or no? If it doth, why do our Brethren of the Separation take the liberty to depart from his example in these things; if his example layeth no necessity upon us to follow it in these particulars, how doth Sitting become necessary barely upon the Account of his example. I desire them therefore Seriously and Impartially to examin this matter, and see if they can assign any reasons for this liberty they take of following the example of our Saviour in some things and not in others, where there is no other Rule to guide them. I believe they will be constrained to do one of these 2 things either to withdraw their Sute against Kneeling, and quit their own Principle, or condemn their own practices as shamefully repugnant to it.

2. The bare example of Christ is no Warrant for us to act by, because the great end and Usefulness of that Glorious example he left us, consists in this, *viz.* that it shews the possibility and clears up the sence of his Laws, and excites and encourages us to the Practice of them; it puts the Rule into activity and sets it forth to the life. It is to our lives as exhortation is to Doctrin, it thrusts us forward to do that which we were obliged in Conscience to do before. *Whatsoever our Lord hath Commanded us to do, in that only we are necessarily bound to Imitate him: But where there is no Precept there is no Necessity.* We may do

do it if we will, and if we can innocently (*as in the case of a single Life*) but we are not under Constraint and an indispensable Obligation. He hath Commanded us to be Meek and Lowly, to be Just and Merciful, to be Patient under all our Troubles and Afflictions, to follow Peace with all Men, to be ever contented and resigned to the Will of our Heavenly Father in all States and Conditions of Life, and the like: And in all these things he became an example to us, that we might follow his Steps. He Commands us to do what he performed himself, and that which we are concerned in, if we would walk surely, is first to look for our Rule, and then for our encouragement to look unto Jesus the Author and Finisher of our Faith. It's true indeed we are Commanded in Scripture to follow the examples of the Apostles so far forth as they follow Christ, and the example of our Lord is made the Touchstone to try all others by, but then if we would know what is our Duty we must bring his example to the Rule. For as to Preach Christ and to Preach the Gospel, to Obey Christ and Obey the Gospel, are Phrases of alike Import in Scripture, so in like manner to follow Christ is all one with following the Gospel Rule, or doing as Christ did in obedience to his Commands. The Sum of all is this, An example may help to Interpret a Law, but of it self it is no Law: Against a Rule no example is a Competent Warrant, and if the example be according to the Rule, it's not the Example but the Rule that is the Measure of our Actions.

1 Cor. 11. 1. Act. 5. 42. Act. 11. 20. Marc. 16. 15. Heb. 5. 9. 2 Thess. 1. 8. Col. 2. 6.

3. The bare example of Christ is no Warrant for us to go by, because he was an extraordinary Person, and did many things which we cannot, and many which we must not do. He Fasted 40 Days and 40 Nights and spent whole Nights in Prayer, he wrought many

Miracles to prove the Truth of his Doctrine and his Divine Authority by, that he was the *Meſſias*, the Son of God and Saviour of Mankind; he was a Prophetical Prieſt, by which office he was obliged to teach us the whole mind of God in all things neceſſary to Faith and Salvation, and to offer up himſelf as a propitiatory Sacrifice for the Sins of the World, nothing (we ſhould quickly experiment) would be more Vain and Fooliſh, than attempts of an Imitation in ſome things: And nothing more Wicked then to think and believe we may and ought to follow his example in others. To dye to Sin and Crucify the Fleſh with its Affections and Luſts, is a good way (as the Scripture Teaches and Warrants) of Imitating our Lords Death in a Spiritual Senſe. So, to Dye rather than deny the Faith and Diſhonour our Saviour, is great and Praiſeworthy, but to Dye for Sin, either our own or other Men's, to propoſe a Meritorious Death to our Selves, and by way of expiation, is a Sin of ſo deep a Stain, that the Blood of Chriſt will not Waſh out. For this in effect is Trampling upon and Vilifying of the Precious Blood of our Saviour, and to detract from the Vertue and Merits of his Sacrifice and thereby render it weak and inſufficient to ſave us. Blindly therefore to follow the example of Chriſt, is a certain way to run into Error and Miſchief. We muſt then of neceſſity if we would follow him ſafely, ſeek out for a plain Rule in the Word of God, or guide our ſelves by the Dictates of Reaſon and Prudence, and either way is a ſufficent Demonſtration that a bare example is not to be truſted to. Thoſe who urge the example of Chriſt for Sitting were ſomewhat aware of this, namely that his example, and thoſe of his Apoſtles are not to be Imitated by us in all things, and therefore they lay down this for their Maxim and Guide.

Gilleſp. againſt Cere. P. 339.

We are bound to Imitate Chriſt and the commendable

dible example of his Apoſtles in all things wherein it is not evident, they had ſpecial reaſons moving them thereunto, which do not concern us But I would willingly be informed how we ſhall be ever able to know when they acted upon ſpecial reaſons, and what they were, that we may know our Duty, if a bare example without any Rule obliges us: And if we guide our Selves by Scripture or Reaſon in this matter, then they are the meaſures of the example. Beſides, if we are not to Imitate them in ſuch things which they were moved to do upon ſpecial reaſons which did not concern us then we are obliged to Imitate their examples in ſuch things as they did, upon general and common reaſons which concern us as well as them, or we are not obliged at all by any example; and if ſo, then thoſe reaſons are our Rule, to which we are to reduce their examples. Without we find ſome general or common reaſon we have no Warrant (according to their own Principle to follow their examples, and when ſuch reaſons do appear, then it's not the example alone that obliges us, but reaſon that approves the example. To bring their own Rule to the caſe in Hand: How do they know but our Lord was moved to Sit at the Sacrament by Special reaſons drawn from that Time and Place, from the Feaſt of the Paſſover to which that Geſture was peculiar? How do they know but that our Lord might have uſed another Geſture if the Sacrament had been Inſtituted apart from the Paſſover.

The neceſſity of the time, made the *Jews* Eat the Paſſover after one faſhion in *Egypt*, which afterward ceaſing gave occaſion to alter it in *Canaan*, and how do we know but that our Lord complyed with the preſent neceſſity, and that his example (if he did Sit) was only temporary, and not deſigned for a Standing Law perpetually obliging to a like practice. If Chriſt acted upon

upon ſpecial reaſons then we are not obliged, by their own Rule; and if he did not, let them produce the reaſons if they can, which make this example of Chriſt of general and perpetual uſe, and to oblige all Chriſtians to follow it. When ever they do this, I am ſure they will expoſe their own Principle which they have built ſo much upon, to the Scorn and Contempt of the World, which is this: *That the bare example of Chriſt and good Men in Scripture, are a compleat Rule and Sufficient Warrant for our Actions, in ſuch things as we have no Precept or Prohibition for in the Word of God: That a Chriſtians Duty in a great meaſure flows purely from Examples Recorded in the Word of God and not from the expreſs Laws of God, which he hath revealed to us.*

Gilleſp. 338. diſp. againſt Ceremo.

4. It's abſurd to talk of Chriſts example apart from all Law and Rule, and to make that alone a Principle of Duty diſtinct from the precepts of the Goſpel, becauſe Chriſt himſelf all the while the World enjoyed the benefit of his example, governed his actions by a Law. For if we conſider him as a *Man*, like unto us in all things (Sin only excepted) he was Born under the obligation of the Moral and Natural Law, as a *Jew* under the *Moſaick* Law; as the *Meſſias* ſent of God into the World, to compaſs the great Work of our Redemption which he had freely undertaken, he ſtill acted by Divine appointment, and was under the Goſpel Law. He came to fullfil all Righteouſneſs and to teach us the whole Mind and Will of God, and Exemplify to us what he taught and delivered. That which made that bitter and deadly Cup which ended his Days reliſh with him, was this conſideration that it was a Cup given him by his Father, and the Drinking it was agreeable to his will, and it was the comfort and ſupport of his Soul a little before his Death, that he had finiſhed the Work

Joh. 18. 11.

that

that his Father had given him. He frequently profeſſed in his life time that he did as his Father gave him Commandment, and that it was his great buſineſs and delight to do the will of his Father, and many ſuch expreſſions he uſed, which may be conſulted at leiſure. If therefore we only look to his example, without conſidering the various Capacities and Relations he bare, both towards God and towards us, and the ſeveral Laws by which he ſtood Bound, which were the meaſures of his Actions, we ſhall miſerably miſtake our way and bewilder our ſelves, we ſhall Act like Fools, when we do ſuch things as he did purſuant to infinite Wiſdom. Thus (to give but one inſtance) if we ſhould Subject our ſelves to the Law of *Moſes* as he did (for he fullfilled the Ceremonial Law, which he came to aboliſh) we ſhould thereby fruſtrate the great Deſign of the Goſpel, and of our Saviours coming into the World: And yet even this we are obliged to do, if his example alone, be a ſufficient Warrant for our Actions. I have ſtaid the longer upon this head becauſe ſo ill a uſe hath been made of Scripture examples, and to ſhew how far forth we may ſafely ſteer by them. I ſcarce know any one Doctrin ſo teeming and big with Error, ſo Fatal to the ſouls of private Perſons, and the Peace of Publick Societies both Civil and Eccleſiaſtical, *as that which teaches us to Learn and Derive our Duty from, and to Judge of the Goodneſs and Badneſs of our Actions by the examples of Chriſt, and good Men, over and above what we are obliged to do by the Precepts and Laws of the Goſpel.*

Joh. 17. 4. vs. Mat. 11, 27. Luk. 2. 49. Joh. 4. 34. Joh. 5. 30. 8. c. 28, 29. Joh. 10. 25. Joh. 14. 24, 31. Joh. 15. 10, 15.

3. They who urge the example of Chriſt againſt Kneeling at the Sacrament, as our Rule to which we ought to Conform, do not follow it themſelves. Becauſe the poſture he Inſtituted the Sacrament in, which they ſay was a Paſſover Geſture, was (if ſo) very different from

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from that which they ſo earneſtly plead for and uſe at this day. For that was a Diſcumbing or Leaning Geſture one the left ſide, much after the manner that we lye upon Couches, with the upper part of the body almoſt erect. It is agreed by all Learned Men that this was the Ancient Cuſtom of the *Jews* in our Saviours time, and is ſo to this day at the Paſſover, by which Geſture they diſtinguiſh this Feſtival night from all others. Now if the ſame Geſture were uſed by Chriſt at the Sacrament as was at the Paſſover, and his example makes it neceſſary and obligatory to all Chriſtians, for what Reaſons and by what Authority do our Diſſenting Brethren change it into Sitting upright according to our Civil way and manner of Feaſting. When they tell us this, it will be very eaſy to juſtify Kneelling by the ſame Authority which they ſhall alledge for Sitting, and our changing the Geſture will be as warrantable as theirs. Unleſs they will ſay that they alone have the Power and Priviledge to recede from the example of Chriſt when and how far they pleaſe, but our Church hath not, nor any other upon the Face of the Earth. To ſay Sitting, as they do, comes nearer to the Geſture uſed by our Lord at the Paſſover and conſequently (as is ſuppoſed) at the Sacrament, then the Kneeling Geſture according to the Cuſtom of our Church, will do them no ſervice. For there is no Room for this Queſtion who cometh neareſt to the example, they or we? When they ought not at all to vary if they keep to their own Rule. The example of Chriſt as it is urged by them againſt Kneeling equally Concludes againſt all other Geſtures, beſides what he himſelf uſed: And then the ſuppoſed Geſture which he obſerved binds to Lying along. For where we have nothing to go by but his Pattern we muſt cut exactly by it, or elſe we take a liberty to do that of our own heads for which

we

we have no allowance: That is, we leave the Pattern which we were obliged only to follow, and Act at random upon our own heads, and then the Pattern cannot be alledg'd for our Juſtification. Though our Church therefore doth not ſtrictly follow the example of Chriſt (as is objected) by requiring all her Communicants to Kneel, yet they have no reaſon to complain and to ſcruple Communicating with us, who do not follow it themſelves, but receive the Sacrament in their ſeparate Congregations in a Geſture different from what our Lord uſed at the firſt Inſtitution of it. The Preſbyterians (if one may Argue from their Practices to their Principles) lay very little ſtreſs on this Argument taken from the example of Chriſt. For though they generally chooſe to Sit, yet they do not Condemn Standing as Sinful, or Unlawful in its ſelf, and ſeveral are willing to Receive it in that poſture, in our Churches, which ſurely is every whit as wide from the Pattern our Lord is ſuppoſed to have ſet us, (whether he Lay along or Sate upright) as that which is Injoyned and Practiſed by the Church of *England*. There is too a Confeſſed variation allowed of and Practiſed by the generality of Diſſenters, both Presbyterians and Independents, from the Inſtitution and Practice of Chriſt and his Apoſtles, in the other Sacrament of Baptiſm. For they have changed Immerſion or Dipping into aſperſion or Sprinkling and Pouring Water on the Face. Baptiſm by Immerſion or Dipping, is ſutable to the Inſtitution of our Lord and the Practice of his Apoſtles, and was by them ordained and uſed to repreſent our Burial with Chriſt, a Death unto Sin and a New Birth unto Righteouſneſs, as St. *Paul* explains that Rite. Now it's very ſtrange that Kneeling at the Lord's Supper (though a different Geſture from that which was uſed at the firſt Inſtitution) ſhould become a Stumbling block

Mat. 3. 16. Mat. 28. 19.

Rom. 6. 4. 6 11. Col. 2. 12.

in the way of Weak and Tender Conſciences, that it's more unpaſſable than the *Alpes*; and yet they can with Eaſe and Cheerfulneſs paſs by as great or a greater change in the Sacrament of Baptiſm, and Chriſten as we do, without the leaſt murmur or complaint. Sitting, Kneeling, or Standing, were none of them Inſtituted or uſed to ſignify and repreſent any thing Eſſential to the Lord's Supper, as Dipping all over was; why cannot Kneeling then be without any wrong to the Conſcience, as Safely and Innocently uſed as Sprinkling? How comes a Gnat (to uſe our Saviours proverb,) to be harder to ſwallow than a Camel? Or why ſhould not the Peace and Unity of the Church, and Charity to the publick, prevail with them to Kneel at the Lord's Supper, as much (or rather more) as Mercy and Tenderneſs to the Infants body, to Sprinkle or pour Water on the Face, contrary to the firſt Inſtitution.

4. They who Kneel at the Sacrament in complyance with the Cuſtoms and Conſtitutions of the Church, whereof they are Members, do manifeſtly follow the example of Chriſt.

For our Saviour complyed with that Paſſover Geſture which was at that time commonly, and generally obſerved by the *Jews*, but cannot be pretended to be the ſame that was uſed at the firſt Inſtitution of that Feaſt in *Egypt*. For thus the Command runs, *Exod.* 12. 11. *And thus ſhall ye Eat it; with your Loyns Girded, your Shoes on your Feet, and your Staff in your Hand: And you ſhall Eat it in haſte it is the Lords Paſſover.* This, ſay the *Hebrew* Doctors, was but a temporary Law, ſuted to the neceſſity of that time, and ſerved for that night only, and did not oblige the following Generations in the Land of *Canaan*. For thus they comment upon it: Four things were contained in this

Law,

Law, which did not oblige but for that night at the Passover in *Egypt*. 1. Eating of the Lamb in their Houses dispersed in *Egypt*, 2. Taking up of the Lamb from the tenth Day, 3 Striking the Blood on their Door Posts, 4. Eating in Haste. Here the Gesture in all probability was Standing, though it be not expresly mentioned: Howsoever it was different from that used by the *Jews* in our Saviours time, which was a Gesture denoting Ease and Rest, and their deliverance from *Egyptian* bondage: And our Lord's Complyance with this Custom may teach us thus much, That we should not be scrupulous about Gestures, but conform to the Innocent and prevailing Customs of the Church wheresoever we live. To this Practice St. *Paul's* Rule well sutes; Not only, *Whatsoever things are True and Just, and Lovely and Pure and Honest*, but, *whatsoever things are of good report*, (*i. e.* well spoken of or laudable:) Not only, *If there be any vertue*, but *if there be any praise* (if any thing be much approved of in Common esteem, or is made commendable by Custom) we are to *think* (or make account of these things,) and Conform our practice to them. And if Christians in the several places of their abode did walk according to this Rule, they would greatly promote the Peace and Welfare of the Church of Christ, and in so doing procure quiet and Peace to themselves, with unspeakable Comfort and Satisfaction. Whosoever would be esteemed and rewarded as a Peacemaker, and avoid the ill reputation and guilt of a Turbulent Person, ought among other things carefully to observe this, *viz.* to Submit to, and Comply with the Innocent Customs of the Church, whereof he is a Member. For thus the same Divine Writer (after he had Argued against Womens being Uncovered in the publick Assemblies) concludes all after this manner: *If any Man seem to be Contentious, we have no*

Vi. Mr. Ainsworth Exod. 12. 6. 11.

Phil. 4. 8.

εὐφημα.

εἴ τις ἔπαινος.

λογίζεσθε.

Mat. 5. 9.

1 Cor. 11. 6.

ſuch Cuſtoms, nor the Churches of God. Pray by the way let this be obſerved from this place, That we may Lawfully do ſome things in the Worſhip and Service of God for which we have no Command or example for in Scripture, or elſe St. *Paul*'s Argument from Cuſtom is of no force.

To ſum up all upon this ſecond Query: Seeing that we can never be certain of the particular Geſture uſed by Chriſt, at the Inſtitution of the Holy Sacrament: Seeing his bare example (ſuppoſing he did Sit) doth not oblige us in Conſcience to Imitate it: Seeing they who urge his example do not follow it themſelves, even in that particular they urge it for: Seeing Conformity to the Geſture preſcribed by Law, is a plain Conformity to the Example and Practice of Chriſt conſidered as to the Equity, Reaſon, and Spiritual Meaning and Inſtruction of it. I think no Man can reaſonably object againſt Kneeling, and ſcruple in Conſcience a Conformity to it, as being repugnant to the example of our Lord.

Query 3.

Whether Kneeling be not altogether Unſutable and Repugnant to the Nature of the Lord's Supper, as being no Table Geſture?

BEfore I proceed to the caſe it ſelf, it will be requiſite to premiſe ſomething which may explain the true ſenſe of it; and Diſcover upon what Grounds and

and Reaſons our Diſſenting Brethren build their ſcruples againſt Kneeling, as being no Table Geſture. By a Table Geſture we are to underſtand thus much; That at the Lord's Supper we ought in their Judgment to uſe the ſame Geſture as we do at our ordinary meals and Tables, at our Civil Feaſts and Entertainments: And becauſe divers Geſtures are uſed at meals, according to the different Modes and Cuſtoms of ſeveral Nations, therefore we are obliged to uſe that at the Sacrament which the Cuſtom of our Country hath preſcribed at our Ordinary and Civil meals. Thus (ſaith the Author of *Altare Damaſcenum* a Stout and Learned Champion for a Table Geſture, *Sitting croſs-legged as the Turks do at their meals, would be amongſt them (if they were Converted) a Comely faſhion of Receiving the Lord's Supper. The Sacrament is a Supper, a Feaſt, a Banquet, and therefore requires a Supper, a Feaſt, a Banquet Geſture. And ſuch a Geſture muſt be uſed as Standeth with the Cuſtom of the Country. In no Nation was it ever held Comely to Kneel at their Banquets, or to Receive their food Kneeling.* So that according to the ſenſe of their own Writers, and great Patrons of Sitting, this is the reaſon why they queſtion the Lawfulneſs of Kneeling: That the Geſture at the Lord's Table ought to be the ſame, with that which we uſe and obſerve at our Ordinary Tables according to the Cuſtom and Faſhion of our Native Country wherein we live.

Diſput. againſt Kneeling. p. 2. p. 36. arg. 4.

Abridgment p. 61. 1 reply to Bp. Morton 3 Inno. Cer. p. 37. Set forth in K. James Reign.

And then the full Import and meaning of the Query is this: *Whether the nature of the Sacrament conſidered as a Feaſt doth not require and oblige us to Sit and not Kneel, becauſe Sitting and not Kneeling is the Ordinary Table Geſture, according to the Mode and Faſhion of* England.

Here

Here the Reader may obſerve that this Argument for Sitting, drawn from the nature of this Holy Feaſt, quite overthrows the two former Arguments drawn from the expreſs Command and Example of our Saviour, and renders them uſeleſs and unſerviceable to their cauſe.

1. For they don't ſay we are obliged to uſe the ſame Geſture with our Lord, but only a Table Geſture, though never ſo different from that which he uſed, according to the Cuſtom of our Country where we live. Various Geſtures, according to the Variety of Faſhions and Uſages of ſeveral Nations at their Common Feaſts, may be all Comely and Sutable to the Nature of this Holy Feaſt: According to this Argument, therefore we are not obliged to Sit, becauſe Chriſt did at the Sacrament, and then his bare Example is no Rule to us in this matter. His Example was Governed and Guided by the Nature of the Sacrament, and the Cuſtom of the *Jews*.

Our Lord Inſtituted the Sacrament before the Paſchal Feaſt was over, and he continued in the ſame poſture which he uſed at the Paſſover ſay they, and that was Sitting. Suppoſe this, what follows? Why therefore we are bound to Sit to after his Example. No, by no means ſay I, unleſs it be the Cuſtom of our Country to Sit at our meals, and Sitting be our Common Table Geſture: Which is the ſtrength of this Argument drawn from the Nature of the thing, if we may believe what they ſay themſelves.

2. Again if the Nature of the Sacrament require a Table Geſture, and we are obliged to uſe that in particular which ſtandeth with the Cuſtom of our Country, and the Geſtures may be different according as their Cuſtoms differ, then God hath no where Commanded the uſe of

of any particular Geſture, nor obliged all Chriſtians in all places to obſerve one and the ſame.

3. And then Thirdly, we may Lawfully obſerve ſome things in the Worſhip of God for which we have no Command or Example in the Holy Scriptures, if this Argument of the Table Geſture be good. And this principle, *viz.* that we ought not to do any thing in the Worſhip of God, but what we have ſome Command or Example for in Scripture, is the great battering Engine which hath been conſtantly imployed againſt the Ceremonies enjoyned by our Church, and it *is a Principle wherein the Myſtery of Puritaniſme doth conſiſt*, as Biſhop *Sanderſon* Notes. Therefore it behoves our Brethren not to be fond of this Table Geſture, as they love the Life of their Cauſe. I am ſure no greater Argument can be afforded of a routed baffled Cauſe in the matter of Sitting at the Sacrament, than to ſee the Patrons of it running up and down in Confuſion, and flying for Refuge ſometime to the Command of Chriſt, then to his Example, when driven out there, then to the Nature of the thing and Civil Cuſtoms, and about again to the Example. For thus the Authors of the forementioned tracts do. Thus much being premiſed, I proceed to Conſider the Queſtion propoſed, for the Reſolution whereof I ſhall,

Preface to his Serm. laſt Edit. 1681.

1. Enquire into the Nature of the Holy Sacrament that ſo we may truly underſtand what Geſture is agreeable or repugnant to it.

2. Shew that the Nature of the Lord's Supper doth not abſolutely require and neceſſarily oblige us to obſerve a Common Table Geſture, in order to our worthy Receiving.

3. That Kneeling is very Comely and agreeable to the

the Nature of the Lord's Supper, though no Table Geſture.

4. That the Primitive Church and Ancient Fathers had no ſuch notion of the neceſſity of a Table Geſture as is maintained and urged by Diſſenters.

1. As to the Nature of the Sacrament I ſhall endeavour to diſcover it under theſe following heads.

Firſt, the Sacrament in the Holy Scripture is called the Lord's Table, and the Lord's Supper, and a Feaſt and Banquet by the Ancient *Greek* Fathers, becauſe of that Proviſion and Entertainment which our Lord hath made for all worthy Receivers. It is ſtyled a Supper and a Feaſt, either becauſe it was Inſtituted by Chriſt at Supper time, at night, or becauſe it repreſents a Supper and a Feaſt: And ſo it is not of the ſame Nature with a Civil and Ordinary Supper and Feaſt, though it bear the ſame name. There is ſome reſemblance between this Holy Feaſt and Civil Feaſts, and the ſhewing wherein it lyes, will in part explain its Nature. There are three things Eſſential and Neceſſary to a Feaſt, and included in the notion of it: Plenty, good Company, and Mirth: And upon the account of theſe the Sacrament is (conſidered in its own Nature) properly a Banquet, a Feaſt, but then it is a Heavenly and Spiritual one, conſiſting of Spiritual Graces and benefits, Communion with Chriſt and with all true believers, ſignifyed by and tendered under the outward Elements of Bread and Wine, and even in theſe three particulars which are Eſſential to it, conſidered as a Feaſt, and are neceſſary ingredients into all Feaſts whatſoever, it very much differs from Civil and Ordinary Feaſts. For though there be *Plenty*, yet it doth not conſiſt of Variety of Diſhes to gratify our Palats or ſatisfy our Hunger, as other Feaſts do, and particularly the Paſſover did, where the Body was filled and Feaſted as well

well as the mind. The Proviſion wherewith our Lord hath Furniſhed out his Table is not of an Earthly and periſhing, but of an Heavenly and Immortal Nature, even the Body and Blood of Chriſt, which we Spiritually Feaſt upon.

Alaſs if we only fix our Eyes and thoughts upon what is placed on the Table and thoſe ſmall portions of Bread and Wine allotted us to Eat and Drink, without lifting up our Hearts (as * our Church exhorts us to do by the Miniſter in her Communion Office) to thoſe Heavenly and Inviſible good things, couched under, and ſignifyed by the outward Elements of Bread and Wine, what is there in all that we ſee that deſerves the name of a Feaſt, or can by the help of any figure (but an Irony) be called by that name. Did ever any Man eſteem that a Feaſt where there was not Meat enough to fill his mouth, nor Drink enough to quench his thirſt. It is upon the account therefore of thoſe Inviſible and Spiritual good things, wherewith the Souls, not the Bodies of worthy Communicants, are Strengthened and Refreſhed (of which the Bread and Wine are but the Types and Shadows) that the Sacrament is and may truly be called a Feaſt or Banquet. And for this reaſon † the *Greek* Fathers called it a *Spiritual Feaſt*, and the Table *a Myſtical Table*; and the Cup, *the Cup of Myſteries*, and the Sacrament, take it altogether, was by them Styled *the Myſtical Supper*, *the Myſtery*, *and Myſteries*, as Preſenting one thing to the Eye and another to the Mind.

* So St. Cypr. St. Chryſoſt. and St. Aug. Expound this Exhort. of the Miniſter at the Communion. Cyp. de orat. Dom. Chry. Hom. de Encænijs, Aug. de ver. Relig. c. 3.

† St. Chryſ. in Pſ. 90. Greg. Naz. orat. 40. Athanaſius, St. Chryſ. Jero. Catich. and others.

2. As Plenty is one neceſſary ingredient into the Nature of a Feaſt, ſo alſo is Choice and Select Company. Feaſts are made in expectation of Friends and Acquaintance. A Man may Dine alone, but in Proper and Ordinary Speech no Man is ſaid to Feaſt alone. Now though the Sacrament doth reſemble our Common

Feasts in this Particular (and therefore hath obtained the name of *Communion*, and the Guests *Communicants*, which Phrases do naturally import Number or Society) yet if we consider what the persons are that constitute this Society and with whom Communion is held, the Nature of this Spiritual Feast will further appear.

And truly our Communion is with God the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, the three Divine Persons of the Holy Trinity, though principally our Lord Jesus the Eph. 2. 18. Master of this Feast, in and through whom we all have access by one Spirit to the Father, as St. *Paul* speaks. This high and inestimable priviledge and Honour of being admitted into the Presence of God, and holding a friendly Correspondence and Converse with him at his Table, is founded on the Blood of Christ which we thankfully Commemorate at this Solemnity, by *which we who were afar off are made nigh, as the* same Eph. 2. 13. Divine Writer hath it. Moreover by Eating and Drinking at the Lord's Table, we are United to, and hold Communion with all Faithful Christians and worthy Communicants, the Members of his Mystical Body the Church, whom he hath redeemed and cleansed by his most precious Blood: And that which qualifyes a Man for such Communion, doth not Consist in External Garbs or Ornaments of the Body, but in Holy and Virtuous Dispositions of Soul, in a *Penitent*, *Humble Charitable*, *Thankful and Obedient Heart*.

3. Another thing necessary to a Feast is Mirth and Joy, (which implyes also good discourse) and in this too the Sacrament resembles our Common Feasts. But then the Joy is of a Spiritual Nature and flows from different Causes.

Not from what we Taste and See, not from our Appetites and Phansies pleased and tickled with the rich-

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neſs and Variety of Diſhes which adorn the Table; nor from our Blood and Spirits raiſed and fermented by generous Wines, but from Divine and Heavenly Conſiderations. From the Boundleſs and Unaccountable Love of God in ſending his onely Begotten and Beloved Son into the World, to lay down his Life and ſhed his Blood as a propitiation for our Sins; from the wonderful Condeſcenſion of our Dear Lord and Maſter, in undertaking this hard Task, in appearing Clothed with our Fleſh, in the form of a Servant and at laſt Humbling himſelf to the Death of the Croſs for our Sakes; from the Victory he hath gained for us over Death and Hell, and all the Spirits of Darkneſs; from the miraculous Redemption he hath wrought, and the Right and Title to Eternal Life, which he hath purchaſed for us Sinful Duſt and Aſhes, by his own moſt Precious Blood. This is the ſecret Language and Diſcourſe of every Devout Chriſtian at this Holy Feaſt, and with theſe kind of Meditations he refreſhes and delights himſelf. So that from the whole we may conclude that the Lord's Supper is in its own Nature truly and properly a Feaſt, though vaſtly different from Common and Ordinary Feaſts throughout; even in thoſe things wherein it ſeems to be like them: As to the ſeveral Names and Phraſes by which the Nature of it is deſcribed they are figurative, and borrowed from Civil Entertainments; but although it hath received the ſame names and is repreſented by Phraſes that properly ſute to Ordinary Feaſts, yet the Lord's Supper differs in its Nature from Civil Banquets as much as Heaven and Earth, Body and Spirit differ in theirs. As to the Bread and Wine which we ſee and taſt, they are only Signs and Types of the true Spiritual Feaſt and ſerve to raiſe our minds to, and whet the Appetites of our Souls after Celeſtial and Heavenly Enjoyments.

Thus much may ſuffice to inform us what the Nature of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper is, conſidered barely as a Feaſt.

2. For a further Diſcovery of its Nature we are to be minded that it is a Feaſt upon a Sacrifice for Sin, wherein we are particularly to Commemorate the Death of Chriſt by way of expiation for the Sins of the World.

1 Cor. 11. 26.

3. It was Inſtituted in Honour of our Lord our great Benefactor and Redeemer, where we meet to preſerve an Eternal memory of his Wondrous Works, to bleſs and praiſe him, and ſpeak good of his name. And thus partaking of the Lord's Supper is a proper Act of Chriſtian Worſhip performed to our Saviour. It's the Worſhip of God manifeſted in our Fleſh, and of our Crucified Lord who ſubmitted himſelf to a Vile and Tormenting Death for the Sake of us Vile and Miſerable Sinners.

4. The Lord's Supper is a Myſterious Rite of Religious Worſhip, which as it reſpects God the Father, hath the Vertue and Efficacy of a Thankſgiving and a Prayer, as the Sacrifices under the Law had. For our deſires and affections may be ſignifyed by Actions as well as Words, and by Ceremonies as well as Speech: And with reſpect to this Notion and End of the Lord's Supper, it was Anciently Stiled *the Liturgy* and the *Euchariſt*; which laſt name as it was given to it in the moſt early Ages of the Church, ſo it ſtill retains the ſame among all the Chriſtian Churches to this day.

Ignat. Ep. ad Epheſ. Juſtin Mar. in Dial. cum Tryph.

5. The Lord's Supper was Inſtituted to be a Fœderal or Covenanting Rite between God and all worthy Communicants: Where, by permitting us to Eat and Drink at his Table he ſignifies that we are in a State of Peace and Friendſhip, and in a Covenant relation with him; and we by coming to his Table and Eating and

Luk. 22. 19. 1 Cor. 11. 24.

Drinking

Drinking in his preſence, do own him to be our God and Saviour and in effect plight our troth to him and Swear Fidelity and Allegiance to him; we take the Sacrament upon it (as we ordinarily ſay) that we will not henceforth live unto our ſelves, but to him alone that Dyed for us, and gave himſelf for us an Offering and a Sacrifice to God for a Sweet Smelling Savour.

6. The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was Inſtituted for this further end, *viz. to be a means* to Convey and Apply to us the Merits of that Sacrifice which Chriſt offered for Sinners on the Croſs; and as a Pledge to aſſure us thereof.

7. It was Inſtituted to be a Sacred Bond of Unity and Concord among all Chriſtians, to engage and diſpoſe us to Love one another, as our Lord Loved us, who thought not his Life too dear, nor his Blood too much to part with for our Sakes.

This is a ſhort, and ſo far as it ſerves my preſent deſign a full account of the Nature of the Lord's Supper. If the Reader deſire to ſee theſe things (which I have but touched upon) more largely proved and explained, let him for his ſatisfaction conſult thoſe two excellent Diſcourſes (among many others) that paſs under theſe names, *viz.* 1. *The Chriſtian Sacrifice*, 2. *Diſcourſe of Religious Aſſemblies.*

Set forth by 1. Dr. Patrick. 2. Dr. Sherlock.

Howſoever, by what hath been ſaid it appears, that the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper is of a complicated Nature, and Inſtituted for various ends, that it is vaſtly different both in its nature and ends from Civil and Ordinary Feaſts: And therefore I conclude that we are not at this Religious Feaſt to guide our Selves by the Rules of Common Table Fellowſhip, but by more Religious and Spiritual Conſiderations. Which leads

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me to the ſecond thing propoſed for the Reſolution of the preſent Caſe.

2. That the Nature of the Lord's Supper doth not abſolutely require and neceſſarily oblige us to obſerve a Table Geſture, in order to a right and worthy Receiving of it. The reaſons that I ſhall offer for the Proof of this are theſe:

1. If the Nature of the Sacrament conſidered as a Feaſt neceſſarily requires a Table Geſture, then the Nature of the Sacrament conſidered as a Feaſt equally concludes for all other formalities which are either Eſſential to all Civil Feaſts whatſoever, or to all Feaſts as they obtain among us. For if Sitting be neceſſary, purely becauſe the Nature of a Feaſt requires it, then all other Circumſtances which the Nature of a Feaſt requires, will be equally neceſſary too. But our Diſſenting Brethren will by no means allow of this, nor think themſelves obliged to obſerve all other formalities, though equally ſutable and agreeable to the Nature of a Feaſt, as Sitting is: Though for what good reaſon I am perfectly in the Dark. For 1. as they omit many things at the Sacrament that are as agreeable to the Nature of a Feaſt as the Table Geſture is, So they obſerve ſeveral Modes and Circumſtances which are not agreeable to the Nature of a Feaſt, as the Cuſtom of our Country ſtandeth. For inſtance at our Common and Ordinary Feaſts it's very ſutable and agreeable to Laugh, to Talk and Diſcourſe together, to Congratulate one anothers welfare, to enquire of the State of abſent Friends and Acquaintance, to Sit with the Head Covered, to Eat plentifully and Drink Frequently, to Carve and Drink to one another. It is further neceſſary and convenient that at ſuch Feaſts the Gueſts ſhould be well attended with Servants and Waiters who are not allowed to Sit down at the Table with thoſe who are Invited.

Invited. It's agreeable that the Gueſts, ſhould if they pleaſe help themſelves, and their Friends where they like: And yet theſe (and many other things of this Nature) though very ſutable to, and commonly practiſed at our Ordinary Feaſts, are not allowed of, nor practiſed by, nor urged as neceſſary to be obſerved at the Sacrament by our Diſſenting Brethren. But why they ſhould plead for and urge the neceſſity of a Common Table Geſture as being agreeable to the Nature of a Feaſt or a Banquet, and at the ſame time think there lyes no neceſſity at all upon them to obſerve other formalities equally agreeable to the Nature of Civil Feaſts, and warranted by cuſtom as much as Sitting, is the great knot of the Queſtion, and that which puzzles me, I confeſs, to unty.

2. They obſerve ſeveral Modes and Circumſtances at the Sacrament which are not agreeable to the Nature of a Feaſt or Supper, nor to the cuſtomary way of Feaſting among us. For example. The Sacrament (ſay they) is a Feaſt, a Supper, and requires a Feaſt, a Supper Geſture; and then too (ſay I) it requires a Supper time. It is called in Scripture *the Lord's Supper*, and it was Inſtituted the ſame night in which he was betrayed, and it's clear that our Lord Adminiſtred it at Even, and that late at the cloſe of the Paſchal Feaſt. Now the Nature of a Supper according to Common uſe and acceptation requires the Evening or Night, as the proper and peculiar ſeaſon for it, and yet our Diſſenting Brethren make no ſcruple of Communicating at Noon.

It's not agreeable to the Nature of a Feaſt, that one of the Gueſts, and the Principal one too, ſhould fill out the Wine, and break the Bread, and diſtribute it to the reſt of the Society; but this the Diſſenters generally allow of and practice at the Holy Communion. It's not

not agreeable to the Nature of a Feaſt to Sit from the Table, diſperſed up and down the Room. In all publick Feaſts there are ſeveral Tables provided, when one is not big enough to Receive the Gueſts, and yet the Diſſenters generally Receive in their Pews, ſcattered up and down the Church, and think one Table is ſufficient, though not capable of Receiving the twentieth part of the Communicants in ſome large Pariſhes and numerous Aſſemblies: And where they are few in number that they may come up to and Sit at the Table they generally are againſt it (eſpecially the Presbyterians) and think they are not obliged to obſerve that formality, though conſtantly practiſed at Common and Civil Entertainments. It's by no means agreeable to the Nature of a Feaſt to be Sorrowful. To Mourn and Grieve at a Feaſt is as Indecent and Unſutable as to Laugh at a Funeral. But ſure our Diſſenting Brethren will not ſay, that to come to the Sacrament with a Penitent and a broken Spirit, to come with a hearty Sorrow for all our Sins, which cauſed much Pain and Torment to our Deareſt and Greateſt Friend, our ever Bleſſed Redeemer: To reflect upon the Agonies of his Soul in the Garden, the Bitterneſs of his deadly Cup, the Torture he endured on the Croſs, with a deep Sympathy and Trouble for the occaſion, they will not ſurely, I ſay, affirm that ſuch a diſpoſition of Heart and Mind, is improper and unſutable to the Nature of this Holy Feaſt which we Solemnize in Commemoration of his Death for our ſakes. I make no doubt but all Pious Diſſenters bring along with them to the Sacrament ſuch a temper, but this they ought not to do if their Rule hold good, *viz.* That at this Feaſt we ought to be guided by the Rules of Common Table Fellowſhip.

2. The Nature of the Lord's Supper doth not neceſſarily require a Common Table Geſture becauſe it's not of

of the ſame Nature with Common and Ordinary Feaſts. It is very ill Logick as well as ill Divinity to argue from Natural and Civil things to Spiritual, to conclude that becauſe they agree in their names they are of the ſame Nature: For example: When any Man, who hath led a looſe, ſenſual, wicked Life, is awakened and excited by the Grace of God, to conſider and take up, to mind Heavenly things and to breath after God, and Chriſt, and Eternity; to alter his mind and his manners, and lead quite another Life from what he did before, this Perſon is in Scripture Phraſe ſaid to be Regenerate and Born again. But if we would go about to Judge of the true Nature of Regeneration and the new Birth purely by the Correſpondency it holds with the Natural Birth, and argue from the Natural to the Spiritual, we ſhould Entertain very groſs and ſilly Conceptions of Regeneration and greatly miſtake the Nature of it. How ridiculous would it be to preſcribe the ſame Rules to be obſerved by a New Convert or a New Born Babe in a Spiritual Senſe, in Order to his Spiritual noriſhment and growth in Grace, as are preſcribed and practiſed towards Infants and New Born Babes in a Natural Senſe for the maintenance and preſervation of their Natural Life, and Strength: As that they ſhould be Swathed and enter into a Milk Dyet. And yet this is every way as reaſonable as to preſcribe Sitting as neceſſary to the worthy Receiving of the Sacrament, which is a Spiritual Feaſt, becauſe it's agreeable to the Nature of Civil Feaſts: Or (which amounts to the ſame thing) becauſe it's called a Feaſt, therefore it's of the ſame Nature with Ordinary and Common Feaſts, and Conſequently ſuch a Geſture and Behaviour as is neceſſary and requiſit to theſe is alſo requiſit and neceſſary to the Lord's Supper.

3. The Nature of the Lord's Supper considered as a Feast, doth not necessarily require and oblige us to use a Common Table Gesture, in order to right and worthy Receiving, because in the Judgment and Practice of numerous Dissenters it may be worthily Received Standing. Thus the Presbyterians (and all their Writers who have engaged against Kneeling) do not condemn Standing as Sinful and Unlawful; nor esteem such as use it unworthy Receivers on that account, and yet Standing is no Common Table Gesture.

Object. If any should yet urge the necessity of Sitting as the only agreeable Gesture to the Nature of the Sacrament considered as a Feast, and that to use any other Gesture would Prophane the Ordinance,

Answer. I offer this to be considered as a good Answer that Exod. 12. 14. the Passover was called a Feast by God himself who Instituted it, and yet he Commanded the Children of Ver. 11. *Israel* to Celebrate it in *Egypt* after this manner, *with* their *Loyns Girt*, their *Shoes on* their *Feet*, *and* their *Staff in* their *Hands*: All Signs of haste indeed, but no Feast or Table Gestures either among the *Jews* or the *Egyptians*. To say that God enjoyned Gestures unsutable to the Nature of that Ordinance, is to call in Question the Wisdom, and the Knowledge, and the Truth of God, as not Acting upon a right understanding of, and in Conformity to the true Nature of things, it's all one as to suppose that God after he had Created a reasonable Creature would enjoyn him to do something that was disagreeable to his Nature and Reason. On the other hand to say that the Feast of the Passover did in its Nature admit of several Gestures, is to yield all that I desire, for then the Sacrament considered as a Feast will admit of several too, and Consequently doth not oblige us to observe only a Feast Gesture for the due Celebration of it.

3. *Kneel-*

3. *Kneeling is very Comely and Agreeable to the Nature of the Lord's Supper though no Table Geſture.* Which I hope will be made evident to every Honeſt and Unbyaſſed Mind (which Impartially ſeeks after Truth) by theſe following conſiderations:

1. Kneeling is allowed on all Hands to be a very fit and ſutable Geſture, for Prayer and Praiſe, and very apt to expreſs our Reverence, Humility, and Gratitude by, and Conſequently very fit to be uſed at the Holy Sacrament and agreeable to its Nature. This will appear if we reflect upon what hath been delivered concerning the Nature and Ends of the Lord's Supper. For at the Sacrament we expreſs that by Actions (as I hinted before) which at other times we do by Words, and the Lord's Supper is a Solemn Rite of Chriſtian Worſhip, which implyes Prayer and Praiſe. It includes all the Parts of Prayer. By partaking of the Signs of his Body broken, and Blood ſhed for our Sins, we do Commemorate, Repreſent and Shew forth to God the Father the Sacrifice which his Dearly Beloved Son made upon the Croſs; we Feaſt upon the memorials of the great Sin-Offering: And in ſo doing we make an open Confeſſion and Acknowledgment of our Guilt and Unworthineſs, to God, and we plead with him in the Vertue of his Sons Blood which was ſhed for us, for the Pardon and Remiſſion of all our Sins. We further Humbly entreat him to be Propitious and Favorable to us, and to beſtow upon us all thoſe benefits which our Lord purchaſed with his moſt Precious Blood.

We Interceed with him too at the Communion for the whole Church, that all our fellow Chriſtians and true Members of his Body may Receive Remiſſion of their Sins and all other benefits of his Paſſion. And as Eating and Drinking at his Table, is a Viſible and Power-

ful Prayer in the ſight of God; ſo it is a Viſible Act of Praiſe and Thankſgiving whereby we let our Heavenly Father ſee that we retain a deep and lively ſenſe of his Unexpreſſible Love, in ſending his only begotten Son into the World to Dye for us that we might Live through him. And that which enlivens our Faith and emboldens our hopes, of finding Favour and Acceptance at his Hands at this time above others, is this, *viz.* Our Prayers and Praiſes are not only put up in the name of Chriſt, but preſented and as it were Writ in his Blood, and offered to God over the great propitiatory Sacrifice. All this our Actions ſignify and ſpeak when we Eat the Conſecrated Bread, and Drink the Cup of Bleſſing at the Lord's Table. If therefore theſe things be True (and I think no body who underſtands what he doth when he partakes of the Lord's Supper will gainſay it) then Kneeling muſt be judged as fitting and convenient to be uſed at ſuch a time, when we ſignify our deſires and affections by external Rites and Ceremonies of Gods appointment, as when we do it by Words, that is, when we ſay our Prayers.

2. Our Diſſenting Brethren (and all good Chriſtians) will Grant that our Bleſſed Saviour ought to be Worſhipt and Adored by all worthy Communicants, inwardly in their Hearts and Souls, when they Receive the Tokens and Pledges of his tender and exceeding great Love in laying down his Life for the Sins of the whole World. And if ſo, then whatſoever is very apt and meet to expreſs the inward eſteem and veneration of our minds by, can't be thought Unſutable and Repugnant to the Nature of the Lord's Supper. Becauſe that is a Religious Feaſt Inſtituted in Honour of our Lord, and is a Solemn Act of Chriſtian Worſhip performed to our Crucified Saviour. Our meeting together at this Holy Feaſt in Obedience to his Commands to Commemorate

memorate his Death and tell of all his wondrous Works, to perpetuate the fame of our great Benefactor (as much as in us lyes) throughout all Ages, is an External mark of the Honour and reſpect we bear towards him in our minds, and is, properly ſpeaking, that which we call publick Worſhip. Since to Bow our Knees then, is allowed to be a proper mode of publick Worſhip, and an External Sign of Reverence, why ſhould an adoring poſture be thought Unmeet and Unſutable to the Sacrament which in its Nature Imports Worſhip and Adoration.

3. No good Chriſtian of what Party or Perſwaſion ſoever will deny but that to lift our Hands and Eyes to Heaven, and to Employ our Tongues in Uttering the Praiſes of our Bleſſed Redeemer, even in the Act of Receiving is very agreeable to the Nature of the Sacrament; why then ſhould Kneeling be thought Unſutable, which is no more but only Glorifying God and our Bleſſed Saviour with another part of our body? Why ſhould the Geſture be ſcrupled at more than the Voice, or the Bowing of my Knees be eſteemed incongruous and unfitting any more than moving my Tongue or raiſing my Hands and Eyes to Heaven? Eſpecially if we conſider that the high degree of Honour and Glory to which our Lord is advanced in the Heavens by God the Father, as the reward of his Humble and Submiſſive Obedience here on Earth, challenges from us all manner of Reſpect and Reverence both of Soul and Body: *He Humbled himſelf, and became Obedient unto Death, even the Death of the Croſs. Wherefore God hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jeſus every Knee ſhould Bow,* &c. *and that every Tongue ſhould Confeſs that Jeſus Chriſt is Lord, to the Glory of God the Father.* Phil. 2. 8, 9, 10, 11.

4. The

4. The Holy Sacrament was Inſtituted in Remembrance of our Bleſſed Saviours Death and Sufferings: And therefore I requeſt all our Diſſenting Brethren to Conſult one place of Scripture concerning our Saviours Bodily Geſture or Deportment in the Heat and Extremity of his Paſſion, wherein he preſented himſelf before his Father in his Agony and Bloody Sweat in the Garden. *Being in an Agony* he offered up this Prayer, to his Father: *If thou be willing remove this Cup from me: Nevertheleſs, not my Will, but thine be done.* But after what manner or in what Geſture of Body did his perplexed Soul utter theſe earneſt Supplications? *Why, Kneeling or fixing his Knees upon the Earth.* Now though we may remember and Meditate on our Saviours Sufferings in the Garden, when his Soul was ſo exceeding Sorrowful, when he was reduced to ſuch a Weak and low Eſtate as to ſtand in need of Comfort and Support from an Angel, though I ſay, this may be done Sitting, yet ſure no Sober and Conſidering Mind, will ſay that to Celebrate the Memory of theſe Sufferings with bended Knees (as his were) on the Earth, is an Improper and Unſutable behaviour to be uſed at the Sacrament, where our proper work is to Commemorate the Death and Sufferings of our Saviour, and particularly theſe among the reſt.

Luk. 22. 42, 44.

Θεὶς τὰ γόνατα. Ver. 41.

Ver. 43.

5. The Sacrament was Inſtituted to be a means of Receiving the benefits of his Death and Paſſion and a Pledge to aſſure us thereof. If we do but Conſider what invaluable Bleſſings we expect to receive by our worthy partaking of the Conſecrated Bread and Wine at the Table of our Lord, (ſuch as the forgiveneſs of all our Sins, the plentiful Communications of his Grace and Spirit, and a Right and Title to Eternal Life) we can't think Kneeling an Unmeet and Unbecoming Geſture in the Act of Receiving the Outward Signs and Pledges

Pledges of this Inward and Invisible Grace. If a Graceful Hearty sense of Gods infinite mercy through the Merits and Sufferings of his Son, and of the manyfold rich benefits which our Lord hath purchased with his most Precious Blood; if a mind deeply Humbled under the sense of our own Guilt and Unworthiness to Receive any mercy at all from the Hands of our Creator and Soveraign Lord, whom we have by numberless and Heinous Crimes so highly provok't and incensed against us; If such an inward temper and disposition of Soul becomes us at this Holy Feast, (which I think no Man will deny) then surely the most Humble and reverential Gesture of our Body, will become us too. Why should not a Submissive Lowly deportment of Body sute with this Solemnity as well as a Humble Lowly Mind? And this is that which our Church Declares to be the end and design of her Injunction, in requiring all her Communicants to Kneel, *viz. for a Signification of an Humble and Grateful acknowledgment of the Benefits of Christ therein given to all worthy Receivers.*

See the Declaration at the end of the Communion Service in the Book of Common Prayer.

6. They who urge Sitting as necessary and the only agreeable Gesture to the Nature of the Lord's Supper, because it's the Common Table Gesture, must make the Sacrament either the same with an Ordinary and Common Feast, or only like it in some respects and unlike it in others; as every like is not the same. To make it the same is directly to unhallow and prophane the Ordinance; *it is to Eat and Drink unworthily, not discerning the Lord's Body*, as St. *Paul* charges the *Corinthians*. For it's clear from that Discourse of the Apostle, that their not distinguishing between the Lord's Supper and a Common Meal or Supper, was their great fault which he sharply reproves them for, as that which render'd them unworthy Communicants. Which will

1 Cor. 11. 29.

Vid. 20, 21, 22. and compare them with 33,34.

will appear to any that will take the pains to examine the matter.

If the Lord's Supper be not the ſame with an Ordinary Feaſt how comes it to paſs, that the ſame Geſture muſt be neceſſarily uſed at both? If they differ in their whole Nature, then that which is agreeable to the Nature of the one muſt be Repugnant to the Nature of the other. If they agree in ſome reſpects only and differ in others, but not in their whole Nature, then Kneeling may be as proper and ſutable in ſome reſpects as Sitting is in others. For though the Civil Cuſtom of a Table Geſture be allowed to ſtrike ſome ſtroke in a Spiritual Ordinance, where there is Eating and Drinking, yet other reſpects in the Lord's Supper have a ſtroke to, and that the greateſt, if we duly weigh and conſider the ends of its Inſtitution which I have already deſcribed. And if upon ſuch Examination it appear, that Kneeling, or an adoring Geſture holds fitting Correſpondence with the principal reſpects and ends of the Lord's Supper, then the Banquetting Geſture, though Lawful and Sutable in ſome leſs reſpects, muſt and ought in reaſon to give place, at leaſt, it ought not to be Inſiſted on as the only agreeable and neceſſary Geſture without which we cannot worthily Communicate.

Whatſoever Geſture anſwers the principal reſpects and ends of this Holy Feaſt, beſt Sutes to its Nature, and conſequently ought in reaſon to be beſt eſteemed of and ſway more with us than any other, if we will wholly guide our ſelves by the Nature of the thing. And that Kneeling or an adoring poſture doth beſt anſwer the Nature and Ends of the Sacrament I think is clear and undenyable, if the account I have given of the Sacrament be good. I am ſure howſoever, that there is no reaſon why Sitting ſhould juſtle out Kneeling

ing as Sinful and Unſuitable to the Nature of this Holy Ordinance. Let Mr. *Cartwright* a Learned Advocate for Nonconformiſts, be heard in this matter, and determin it. *A Man muſt not (ſaith he) refuſe to Receive the Sacrament Kneeling when he cannot have it otherwiſe.* Annot. in Luk. 22. 14.

4. The Primitive Church and Ancient Fathers had no ſuch notion of the neceſſity of a Table Geſture as is maintained and urged by Diſſenters at preſent, which will appear from thoſe Names and Titles they gave to this Holy Feaſt. And Firſt, I obſerve from the Learned Mr. *Mede*, that for the ſpace of 200 years after Chriſt there is not the leaſt mention made of the name *Table* in any of their Writings. They call the place on which the Conſecrated Elements ſtood the *Altar*, and the Euchariſt, An *Oblation* and a *Sacrifice*, becauſe at this Solemnity they did Commemorate and Repreſent that Sacrifice which Chriſt once offered on the Croſs for the Sins of the World. Now the Euchariſt conceived under the Notion of a Sacrifice and the place on which it was offered, of an Altar, doth not neceſſarily require a Table Geſture, there is not that ſtrict Connexion and Relation between an Altar or a Sacrifice, and a Common Table Geſture as is conceived to be between a Feaſt or Table, and a Feaſt or Table Geſture.

Can. Apoſt. 2 St. Ignat. in 3 Epiſtles ad Philad. Tral-len. Eph. Juſtin mart. Irenæus.

2. The Primitive Chriſtians and Ancient Fathers of the Church did not entertain any ſuch conceits about the neceſſity of a Common Table Geſture, as our Diſſenters do. As that *Kneeling or an adoring Geſture is againſt the Dignity of Gueſts, and Debarrs us the Priviledges and Prerogatives of the Lord's Table, ſuch as Social admittance and Social Entertainment, that it is againſt the purpoſe of Chriſt whoſe intention was to Dignify us by Setting us at his Table*; and much more of this Nature, and to this effect. Now the Primitive Church little dreamt of

Diſpute. againſt Kneeling Arg. 1. p. 6. p. 26, 27, 28. 31, 37.

this Dignity and Priviledge of Communicants, of this purpoſe of Chriſt and of this kind of Fellowſhip and Familiarity with him. The Phraſes they uſe, and the Auguſt and Venerable Titles they give the Holy Sacrament, even when they conſider it as a *Feaſt* and *Supper*, and ſpeak of the *Table* on which it was Celebrated, plainly demonſtrate. They call it as St. *Paul* doth, the *Lord's Supper, the Kingly Royal, and moſt Divine Supper*, which Import Deference, Diſtance and Reſpect on our Parts; *the Dreadful Sacrifice, the Venerable and Unbloody Sacrifice, the Wonderful and Terrible Myſteries; the Royal, Spiritual, Holy, Formidable, Tremendous Table.* The Bread and Wine after Conſecration, are in their Language called the *moſt Myſterious, moſt Holy Food and Nutriment* the *moſt Holy things*, and the place where the Table ſtood, the *moſt Holy part of the Temple*, in alluſion to that of the *Jewiſh* Temple, to which the *Jews* paid the higheſt Reverence. The Bread in particular they Stiled the *Bread of God*; the Cup, the *Holy and Myſterious, the Royal and Dreadful Cup.*

The Primitive Biſhops and Holy Fathers adviſe the Communicants to *Reverence theſe Holy Myſteries, to come with Fear and Trembling, with Sorrow and Shame, with ſilence and downcaſt Eyes, to keep their Joy within*, and to approach the Table with all the Signs and Expreſſions of Reverence and Humility imaginable. How can theſe Speeches conſiſt with that Social, Familiar carriage at the Sacrament, which the Patrons of the Table Geſture contend for, as the Priviledge of Gueſts and the Prerogative of the Lord's Table. For a concluſion of this whole matter, I deſire our Nonconforming Brethren ſeriouſly to conſider two or three Queſtions which I ſhall propound to them and endeavour to frame an Honeſt and Impartial Anſwer, as in the Preſence of God who ſearches our Hearts and tryeth our Reins.

They

They are not of a Captious Nature ſtarted to puzzle the cauſe, or for the ſake of Contention (God knows my Heart I have no ſuch deſigns through this whole Diſcourſe) but they are plain and eaſie to be reſolved almoſt at firſt ſight.

Qu. I. *Whether of two or three Geſtures which are all agreeable to the Nature of the Sacrament any one is not to be choſen and uſed, by us, when we can't uſe another without breaking the Peace and Unity of that Church wherein we live?*

Qu. II. *Whether it can conſiſt with Piety or Prudence, to Expoſe your Selves and Families to Danger and the laſh of the Law, when nothing is Commanded but what is conſiſtent with the Law of God and agreeable to the Nature of the Sacrament, though not to your Phanſies and deſires.*

Qu. III. *Whether we are not, as Chriſtians, obliged by the Law of God and the example of our Saviour to deny our Selves many things, that are otherwiſe Lawful for us to do and uſe, and are highly pleaſing and grateful to us, for the Good and Edification of our Neighbour? If ſo, How much more, when the publick good and welfare of both Church and State depends upon ſuch ſelf-denyal.* Rom. 15. 2, 3, 8.

Qu. IV. *Whether it be Piouſly done of you to chuſe never to Receive the Sacrament, and ſo deprive your Selves of the Spiritual Benefit of that Heavenly Feaſt, rather then part with a Civil Circumſtance ſuch as a Table Geſture is.*

It is the Cuſtom of our Country to Sit at Feaſt but few Men are ſo mad as to refuſe to Eat Standing and go Hungry away, when they have no room to Sit down. Why ſhould we not be as Prudent at this Spi-

ritual Feaſt, in the Concerns of our Souls, as we are in thoſe of our Bodies.

Put the caſe we were ſtrictly prohibited by the Law of the Land, the uſe of a Table or a Table-cloth at this Holy Feaſt, and we could not receive with that Convenience as now we may, would you end your days in a continual refuſal and never receive the Sacrament? I don't know how far Paſſion and Prejudice and the heat of Diſputation may blind and tranſport Men; but if they will calmly conſider this matter, and hearken to Reaſon, they will find nothing to juſtify the total neglect of this Ordinance by. I am very apt to think they will be of my mind, for I declare to all the World, rather then not Receive at all the Comfortable Sacrament of our Bleſſed Saviours Body and Blood, I will Receive it on a Tomb-ſtone, on the ground, in a Church or in a Field, if all other things that are Eſſential to it be rightly obſerved and performed. If any of our Diſſenting Brethren ſhall upon this Queſtion think as I do, *viz.* that there is no abſolute neceſſity of a Table in this caſe, which the Cuſtom of our Country requires at Ordinary Feaſts; He will alſo at the ſame time ſee there is no abſolute neceſſity of a Table Geſture, and that we may Receive worthily without either the one or the other.

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